

LIFE POLICY. VIRTUE VS.
SUCCESS

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supposes a dialogue between Michael Angelo, Machiavelli, and Granaqci about Francis I, Henry VIII, Charles V, and Leo X, in which the speakers attempt to foresee the development of events. They do not rightly estimate the royal personages, do not foresee the Reformation, and do not at all correctly judge the future. It was impossible that any one could do the last at a time when great historical movements and efforts of personal vanity and desire were mixing in gigantic struggles to control the world's history. Italy offered a narrower arena for personal ambition. Creighton¹ describes Gismondo Malatesta of Rimini. He "thoroughly mastered the lesson that to man all things are possible. He trusted to himself, and to himself only. He pursued his desires, whatever they might be. His appetites, his ambition, his love of culture, swayed his mind in turns, and each was allowed full scope. He was at once a ferocious scoundrel, a clear-headed general, an adventurous politician, a careful administrator, a man of letters and of refined taste. No one could be more entirely emancipated, more free from prejudice, than he. He was a typical Italian of the Renaissance, combining the brutality of the Middle Ages, the political capacity which Italy early developed, and the emancipation brought by the new learning." This might serve as a description of any one of the great secular men of the period. "Capacity might raise the meanest monk to the chair of St. Peter, the meanest soldier to the duchy of Milan. Audacity, vigor, unscrupulous crime, were the chief requisites of success." ² "In Italy

itself, where
there existed no time-honored hierarchy of classes
and no foun-
tain of nobility in the person of a sovereign, one
man was a
match for another, provided he knew how to assert
himself.

In the contest for power, and in the maintenance of
an illegal
authority, the picked athletes came to the front." ³

723. Perverted use of words. Many words were
given a pecul-
iar and technical meaning in the use of the
period. *Tristezza*

often meant wickedness. It was a duty to be
cheerful and gay.⁴

"Terribleness was a word which came into vogue
to describe

¹ *Hist. Essays and Reviews*, 138.

² Symonds, *Renaissance*, I, 52.
92.

⁸ *ftid.* > 53.

⁴ Gauthiez, *Lorenzaccio*,